

T H E
ABBEY OF AMBRESBURY.

(Price Two Shillings)

ABBEE OF AMBRESBURY.

(HISTORICAL)

THE
ABBEY OF AMBRESBURY.

A P O E M.

PART THE FIRST.

By SAMUEL BIRCH,
AUTHOR OF CONSILIA, &c.

“ Sit mihi fas audita loqui — ”

Virg.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL, STRAND; J. SEWELL, CORNHILL;
AND J. DEBRET, PICCADILLY. 1788.

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ABBEY OF AMBRESBURY.

A P O E M

PART THE FIRST

BY SAMUEL BIRCH.

A TREATISE OF CONSIDERATION

THE MIND FOR THE MIND

188

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PRINTED FOR T. CARRILL, STRAND, J. REWELL, CORNHILL;
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L

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

THE ABBEY of AMBRESBURY is said to have been originally founded by AMBROSIUS, for 300 Monks, to pray for the Souls of those that were slain by the Treachery of HENGIST. After the growing Enormities of several Centuries, the Abbess and 30 Nuns were expelled for their Incontinence, in the Reign of HENRY II. — 1177, and towards the 13th Century, it came into great Repute; and not only ELEANOR Queen of HENRY III. but also MARY, Daughter of EDWARD I, and 13 Noblemens Daughters, were veiled here on Assumption Day, 1285. *Camden's Britannia.*

The Nunnery was built by ELFRIDA to expiate the Murder of her King, EDWARD THE YOUNGER. In the Reign of HENRY II, 1177, when the Nuns were expelled, other Nuns from FONT EVERARD were introduced, and afterwards it came into Repute. *Monasticon.*

Some Manuscripts chiefly relating to the above Abbey about the 13th Century, have furnished the AUTHOR with Materials, upon which this Poem is principally founded. — As it is matter of Experiment, the Continuation of them will altogether depend upon the Reception these meet with in the World. — The Whole is thrown back to a Period, when the Abbey is supposed to have been in its first Stage of Decay.

THE

ABBNEY OF AMBRESBURY.

PART THE FIRST.

WHAT gloomy spectre at this twilight hour
Steals on my sight with fascinating pow'r,
And with enquiring pause directs her way
Amid these scenes, more solemn by decay?
'Tis SUPERSTITION! hark! the screech owls pour
Their petrifying notes from yonder tow'r;
Oppressive vapours hover round the seat,
And the clouds droop with more than usual weight.

B

And

And beams a crucifix upon the breast,
When human blood is clotted on the vest? —
The mitre ill becomes the murderer's head, —
Ill suit the crozier, and the reeking blade:
Hence then delusive Phantom! Shadow, hence!
Shrink from the day, nor mock the affrighted sense.
Within these ivy'd walls foul reptiles feed,
No monks now riot, and no martyrs bleed:
To kindred earth long since have those been giv'n,
And these long since enjoy'd their promis'd heav'n.
Many thy vassals now in lasting sleep,
Who only liv'd to fight, and wak'd to weep;
At length releas'd from thy delusive sway,
Without thine aid shall reach eternal day.

O! were these walls permitted to rehearse,
Or might our retrospective vision pierce
Time's sacred volume, thro' each crowded page
Dark with the annals of thine iron age,
What monuments of blind, mistaken zeal,
The faithful Record would at once reveal!

Myriads

Myriads of Youth by thy destructive spell
Sent living fun'ral to the cloister'd cell ;
Condemn'd the wretched penance to abide
Of foul hypocrisy and monkish pride.
Each warm affection and paternal care
Left unrequited for the pomp of pray'r ;
Each social duty, each endearing tie,
The soul's best bond, its native sympathy,
And those few virtues which our natures own,
Alike forgotten or alike unknown.

There the pale Vestal to thy shrine betray'd,
Her spirits wasted, and her bloom decay'd,
All melancholy mourns the ling'ring day,
Forbid to feel and tutor'd how to pray ;
Taught to confess thro' the unblushing grate
Those sins (if sins) the darksome walls create,
While soft confession and reluctant pray'r
Follow the bead less frequent than the tear :
And from the lonely midnight couch arise
The lovely captive's ineffectual sighs.

With

With silent anguish is her bosom torn
And native transports struggling to be born ;—
The sigh of meek compassion, faithful guest !
Supreme and sacred in the female breast ;
The soft vibrations of the tender vow,
And all the nameless extacies that flow
From kindred harmony, domestic peace,
Maternal rapture, and connubial bliss.
Add too the mild sensations which await
The daily comforts of the crowded gate,
Whose bounty never fails the poor to bless
Like Heaven's own manna, in the wilderness ;
Where streams no sorrow, where the sons of need
Are cloath'd if naked, and if hungry fed :—
Those blameless transports of the virtuous mind
From Heav'n descended, and by Heav'n design'd
To soothe our sad variety of woe,
And harmonize the state of man below.

Such might have render'd many a vestal dear,
The sun and solace of her social sphere.

But

But these expir'd at some foul dæmon's hour,
 Crush'd by the iron hand of papal pow'r.
 Hard state ! the soul of sympathy deny'd
 To share the pleasure, or the pain divide ;
 Joyless herself :—to other's joys unknown,
 She drops no tear for sorrow but her own ;
 Till pining in the solitary gloom,
 She sinks unpity'd to an early tomb.

Thus droops the beauteous plant of tender birth,
 When rudely sever'd from its parent earth :
 Though all alluring to the spoiler's view
 The grace and fragrance of the vale it grew,
 In some dank cave its dying sweets exhale,
 Where cheers no Sun, where breathes no vernal gale ;
 The infant buds just bursting into day,
 Strive to expand, and 'ere they bloom decay.

Such the long line successive ages knew,
 Of charms secluded far from public view : —
 Such, thou, MARIA !* Such thy royal train,
 Which graceful crowded round the hallow'd fane.

C

Proud

* Mary, Daughter of Edward I. who with Thirteen Ladies of noble Birth took the Veil at this Place 1285.

Proud of it's conquest, it receiv'd the weight
Of regal ensign, and discarded state ;
While each fair Vestal rang'd the ducal gem,
Attracted by thy princely diadem.
Tho' proud the off'ring, tho' the wealthy shrine
Beam'd with the massy splendour of the mine,
And thro' the cloysters' counterfeited night
Shed with pale glimm'ring a religious light :
Yet these were poor, and what the world might spare,
Or worthy only of a miser's care.
But when that shrine with a despotic zeal
Shrouds thee, MARIA, in its lasting veil ;
And with her impious avarice can bind
Her icy fetters on thy genial mind :
'Tis then we mourn the tribute thou hast paid
To cold austeri'ty, thou ROYAL MAID !
And dare pronounce that sacred cause betray'd,
Its substance flighted, and ador'd its shade.
For ah ! what recompence will they pretend
To bless that world they rob of such a friend ;
Who, under colour passion to controul,
Enthrall the active virtues of the soul ?

What

What tears atone, what penance shall repair
The desolating griefs which those must bear,
Thro' the wide circle thou wert born to bless,
Source of their joys, their refuge in distress;
When thou of earthly comfort valu'd most,
And with thee all their soothing hopes are lost?

Such too, ELTRUDA, shall the muse relate,
Of humbler birth, and of severer fate.

Pure was ELTRUDA, and of modest guise,
When blooming she attracted CLIFFORD'S Eyes;
He found her weeping o'er her parent's tomb,
In grief prophetic of her woes to come.
No loud complaint; — but at each deep drawn sigh,
The silent sorrow crept from either eye.
No common anguish wrung her pliant heart
Of tend'rest sense, as yet untaught to smart.
Inur'd to early joy, each laughing day
From morn to eve was innocently gay:

The

The welcome dawn blush'd with returning light,
And eve serenely shadow'd into night.
Soft was her pillow, balmy was her rest,
Pleasing her dreams, for peaceful was her breast.
Thus long she flourish'd, dear to all beside,
The very idol of paternal pride.
An orphan now, unfriended, and unknown
(For who will make the orphan's cause their own?)
She views the world's wide waste with steady eye,
Prepar'd to meet its dangers, or to die.

As near the humble sepulchre he drew
With lightest step, she caught him in her view ; —
Fair as the new dropt snow, her features shone,
Kiss'd by the radiance of the rising sun ; —
Bright in her eyes their native azure play'd,
Like lucid streams that sparkle in the shade :
Her auburn tresses with luxuriance fell,
And vainly strove her bosom to conceal ;
Which gently heaving, shot resplendent light,
And thrill'd the gazer with its matchless white.

The

The youth at ev'ry rising charm amaz'd,
The more enamour'd grew, the more he gaz'd:
And much he falter'd, as he strove to plead,
For thus intruding near her honour'd dead.
The flame his reason had approv'd, for she
Had equal worth, tho' not of like degree.
In his pure breast the struggling passion glow'd,
And from his lips in artless accents flow'd.
She heard the tale, nor did it fail to move, —
A transient hectic blush'd approving love.
Confus'd she fled, without desire to fly,
The blameless impulse of her modesty.
Tho' dear his counsel whom she much deplor'd,
She fain would trust the youth's persuasive word,
Which true to honour tremblingly convey'd,
Unusual transport to the attentive maid.

Thrice had the sun emblaz'd the western main,
And thrice the eastern world illum'd again ;
When the tall bark on lab'ring billows bore
The rev'rend BERNARDINE to Albion's shore.

The hoary abbot with religious haste
Tempted the dangers of the wat'ry waste,
True to his trust, and eager to fulfil
The stern severity of MORCAR'S will :
Who, oft revolving on ELTRUDA'S fate,
What snares surprize, what horrors might await
His child, when he was mould'ring in his grave,
No tongue to counsel, and no arm to save :
At length in BERNARDINE the charge repos'd,
So soon as death his wasting hour had clos'd,
To veil ELTRUDA in a convent's gloom,
To soothe her sorrows, and prevent the doom.

When now the sky had smil'd with orient light,
Breath'd health to nature, and disrob'd the night ;
While yet the dews were ling'ring on the spray,
And the lark scarcely had pronounc'd it day :
ELTRUDA rose, another morning star,
(Sleep flies the god of love, as well as war)
Her maid, as was her custom, she dismiss'd,
Wept o'er the cross, and then devoutly kiss'd ;

With

With lab'ring bosom told each matin bead,
And sigh'd with suff'rings which she dar'd not plead :
(For CLIFFORD's image breathes in ev'ry vein,
Twines round her heart, and maddens in her brain)
This done ; with stated industry she plies
Th' historic loom, or simpler distaff tries.

Mean while, with many a pause, the due of age —
Silent and slow approach'd the rev'rend sage.
ELTRUDA thro' the lattice saw him bend
With feeble steps, and towards the lodge descend.
A pilgrim's staff he bore, which seem'd design'd
The stay at once of body and of mind :
Firm was the prop, and hewn from heart of oak,
And on it's top his Saviour's image spoke.
Aw'd by his venerable form, the maid
Rose from the loom with glowing cheek, and said ;
“ Haste ! BERTHA ! haste ! and for yon' stranger wait ;
“ The path he takes winds to the orchard gate :
“ Sacred his garb, his face benign appears,
“ And his hoar locks proclaim his num'rous years.”

The

The willing damsel at her bidding ran : —

Wide flew the wicket for the holy man.

When lowly bending, these her accents mild

Flow'd from the lips of MORCAR's lovely child :

“ Thus honour'd, — rev'rend father ! — much I owe,

“ Tho' small the means are left me to bestow ;

“ Yet of that little good with freedom share,

“ Which can no value but its welcome bear.

“ Well was it done to bless our lowly cot —

“ The orphan then is not of heav'n forgot !”

“ The ministers of Heav'n to all allied,”

(With half recover'd breath, the Sage reply'd) —

“ By Heav'n are taught to deal its good abroad,

“ For nature no where lives without her God :

“ Whose care protects, whose comforts still abound,

“ Far as creation's utmost trace is found :

“ Nor to the mountain cedar only kind,

“ Which proudly grapples with the fiercest wind ;

“ But where the tendril is unshelter'd cast,

“ Softens the rigour of the northern blast :

Alike

" Alike the rudest shoot, or fairest flow'r,
 " Cheers with his sunshine, softens with his show'r;
 " And by his equal pow'r commission'd now,
 " I bear his comfort to this house of woe.
 " I had arriv'd 'ere MORCAR's latest breath,
 " To chase the terrors from the shades of death;
 " But adverse winds my eager soul detain'd,
 " Besides — alas! — with added years I bend:
 " Unequal time my feeble pulses keep,
 " And languid nature fights for lasting sleep;
 " But bright indeed is my declining day,
 " To save his child, and his last charge obey."

ELTRUDA's heart its full oblation shed —

To ev'ry eye the soft infection spread:

She try'd to speak; but sobbings choak'd the sound,
 At length her struggling words imperfect utterance found:

" You knew, and valued then my honour'd Sire? —

" Alas! — forgive — I'm prompted to enquire —

" I would believe the joy I hope to find —

" For sure, methinks you talk'd of adverse wind: —

" Are you of Normandy? my hopes incline —

" 'Tis no delusion! — you are BERNARDINE!

E

" That

" That dear, tho' distant, friend, whom MORCAR priz'd,
 " Whose doctrines charm'd him, and whose love advis'd.
 " Full oft the little portion of our care
 " (For what felicity but has its share ?)
 " Has vanish'd at the magic of thy pen,
 " Which bade domestic comfort smile again.
 " Dear to our childhood was thy early fame,
 " We thought of virtue, and we lis'd thy name:
 " With eager joy partook the blessing sent,
 " And lov'd it, 'ere we knew what blessing meant.
 " Judge then, 'tis some return for suff'ring past,
 " That I have liv'd to see that friend at last.

BERTHA mean while in comely order laid
 The frugal board, with healthful blessings spread;
 No tortur'd viands to provoke the taste,
 But sylvan dainties crown'd the rude repast.
 With mantling pride the grateful beverage flow'd,
 Which the ripe clusters of their fruits bestow'd.
 Small was her portion of paternal land,
 Yet nature stor'd it with a partial hand.

Here

Here cheerful Spring her loveliest tints display'd,
And spread for Summer an indulgent shade;
Bloom'd round the cot, and caroll'd on the trees,
Drop'd her first dew, and fann'd her purest breeze:
Where e'er she trod, a sudden plenty smil'd,
And brightest verdure from her wings distill'd.
E'en Summer shone upon this blest retreat
More with a genial than a sultry heat:
Here Autumn twin'd, benignant and profuse,
Swell'd her tall grain, and press'd her gen'rous juice.
Blaz'd o'er the furrows of the active plough,
And blush'd unbidden on the loaded bough.
E'en fullen Winter, tyrant of the year,
Seem'd to display a milder scepter here;
Thick forests climb'd, and hills superbly rose
To screen from eastern pests, and driving snows.
So Peace once blest, and Plenty heap'd the board,
Rough as the virtue of its rustic lord;
When the strict labour of each sturdy swain
Pluck'd his own fruits, and sow'd his varied grain;
Smil'd

Smil'd with contentment as his vintage bled,
And thriving harvests promis'd future bread :
'Ere Commerce yet a Court's refinement knew,
And with its blessings brought its curses too :
Effeminate and proud 'ere prosp'rous trade
Forgot the useful sphere, for which 'twas made ;
Loft the bold features of its honest mould,
Supine with luxury, and damn'd with gold !

With many a pleasing tale, her aged guest
Maintain'd the converse, and prolong'd the feast :
'Till all remov'd, and every wish supply'd,
At length his purpose to disclose he try'd.
Soft in persuasive numbers he began,
And with much caution weigh'd the wiser plan :
Warmly he colours the long train of woes
To which her wants, her years, her charms expose
That tender frame, susceptible of wrong,
To whom no dues by sacred ties belong —
The portrait breath'd, and own'd a master's pow'r ;
From her full eyes descends a lucid show'r :

The

The holy artist inly joys to find
Her soul already soft'ning to his mind, ——
He seiz'd the moment, and with glad surprise
To charm her passions happier scenes arise.
Well skill'd in pious lore, he taught full well
The holy raptures of the cloister'd cell,
The charms of solitude, the force of pray'r,
Faith's balmy vision, hope's celestial tear,
The peaceful Vestal's pure unclouded ray
From emanations of eternal day.
The fair Elysium with success he drew,
ELTRUDA's fancy kindled at the view : ——
Entranc'd she follow'd, where description went,
Her reason slumber'd, and she gave consent.
O'erjoy'd the Abbot saw his wish succeed,
And with her Father's fiat sanctify'd the deed.

Soon as the sealing shadows of the night
Stole with soft slumbers o'er his yielding fight,
ELTRUDA issued forth without dismay,
The moon illum'd her solitary way :

F

She

She pass'd the Forest with a fairy tread,
 And gain'd the mansion of her honour'd dead.
 In fun'ral state an aged cypress grew,
 And o'er the tomb its wither'd branches threw.
 Its bending trunk below had form'd a seat
 From storms and noon-tide rays a calm retreat.
 'Twas here, beneath the cypress' hallow'd shade,
 Th' enamour'd pair their chaste devotions paid.
 Within the gaping rind a note she plac'd,
 And measur'd back her path with equal haste.
 Th' inverted bark its dear deposit held
 Sacred from all, but lover's eyes conceal'd:
 "Farewell!" it said "Dear youth of my desires!
 "Thy lov'd ELTRUDA from the world retires;
 "A vestal now she consecrates her days,
 "So wills her Father, so his child obeys.
 The walls of AM'ESBURY her vows receiv'd
 'Ere the fourth sun the shades of night reliev'd.
 That duty done—the venerable seer
 With placid brow return'd, and conscience clear.

Now

Now wakeful CLIFFORD saw the morn arise,
And spread her saffron lustre thro' the skies.
That sacred morn, whose dear appointment fell
In eager accents, at her last farewell.
His 'broider'd vest with coral clasps he brac'd; —
A sea-green mantle o'er his shoulders cast, —
A golden belt his trusty falchion bore —
Fair was the plume his graceful temples wore —
The beauteous courser glitt'ring in the gate
Impatient neighs, and paws with restless feet,
Whose mane, descending from his lofty crest,
Screens his arch'd neck, and sweeps his ample chest.
Soon on the steed the agile CLIFFORD sprung,
Loud struck the hoofs, the vaulted portal rung :
Ardent he flew, and greater was the need
To check his fury, than provoke his speed :
Shot up the mountain from the lagging train,
Rush'd down the giddy steep, and bounded o'er the plain.
The sun had pointed with his strongest beam,
When CLIFFORD's horn saluted Avon's stream :
Low in the dale it sounded strong and clear ;
But absent she to whom its notes were dear.

Nor

[Nor more shall Avon's chrystal mirror greet,
A form so lovely, or a face so sweet. —]

His train a while dismiss'd, alone he stray'd
Thro' winding forests to the cypress' shade,
And his warm fancy multiply'd in vain
What cause his lov'd ELTRUDA could detain.
With aching eyes he now explor'd the glade ; —
Now for her absence fond excuses made ; —
Now dire distrust her dark creation rear'd,
And various ills in various shapes appear'd ;
Now sooth'd with hope, — with fear oppress'd again,
A wild suspense distracted all the brain ; —
Wearied and faint he trod the place around ;
At length the silent Oracle he found.
So in the shade of DELPHOS' sacred wood,
In ancient time, th' attentive warrior stood ;
Wrapt in his future weal, with greedy ear,
Afraid to question, — yet resolv'd to hear :
By terror check'd, or boiling rage impell'd,
As the inspir'd voice his fate reveal'd.
CLIFFORD her alter'd state with horror view'd,
And the sad news his gallant heart subdu'd :

Till

Till the warm blood renew'd its active course,
 And ev'ry nerve was brac'd with added force.
 Then all despotic love with fury sway'd;
 He hugg'd the chains, and all its will obey'd.
 For "by his faith," full solemnly he swore,
 "By all the honours which his knighthood bore,
 "His best inheritance his father's fame,
 "And by his love, his dear ELTRUDA's name;
 "By all the vows of truth their lips had seal'd,——
 "The SACRED CROSS that flam'd upon his shield,——
 "Whate'er the danger, misery or pain,
 "To perish, or his destin'd bride regain."
 Without delay, four valiant youths he nam'd,
 For tried integrity, and prowess fam'd;
 Who train'd to arms in earlier days beheld
 The sacred banners wave o'er Salem's field;——
 These chosen few the ready league embrac'd,
 And the fair Nun was more than half releas'd.

'Twas now ELTRUDA first began to feel
 A deep regret for MORCAR's pious zeal,

G

And

And her free soul reluctantly could bear
Th' eternal prison, and unvaried pray'r.
No more its transports could her heart illumine,
And ev'ry cloister wore a darker gloom.
All undevout she heard the matten bell,
Nor vesper strains could cheer her lonely cell.
She knew no penance for offences past,
Bright as an angel, as an angel chaste !
Her only crime was wishing to be free,
And enough penance was captivity.
The abbey thus bound fetters on the sense,
First taught the sin, then punish'd the offence.
To all the vestal train her grief appear'd,
One bosom friend alone the secret shar'd ;
To her most dear ; but yet of all belov'd,
Her softness charm'd them, and her sorrows mov'd.

When the full chords awak'd the ev'ning Choir,
With solemn sweetness, and seraphic fire,
With this one friend, ELTRUDA oft would stray,
Far as the abbey-wall prolong'd the way.

No

No friendly culture could the garden own,
Whose very trees were into cloisters grown :
Still as they wander'd at the close of day,
Some minstrel ever and anon would play,
Who swept the strings, with such resistless art,
As warm'd with extacy the conscious heart :
Plaintive the music of each trembling wire ——
It seem'd no mortal hand that touch'd the lyre ——
It ceas'd ; and on the dying breeze around,
A horn pour'd forth its wide expanding sound,
Frequent and sweet ; to trace the cause they try
In vain ; the gates are strong, the walls are high ;
Nor can they guess, the minstrel yet unseen,
Whence the strains issue, or what purpose mean.
“ In happier Days,” ELTRUDA oft would cry,
“ Notes sweet as these proclaim'd my CLIFFORD nigh ;
“ But now some peaceful maid his passion shares ——
“ ELTRUDA only owns him in her pray'rs.”
At length above a rugged steep they wind,
And gaze around ; but can no lyrist find.
Now softer strains ascend : —— himself conceal'd,
The minstrel now ELTRUDA's charms beheld. ——

So

So feels the prostrate Persian at the sight
 Of his refulgent god, the sacred orb of light !
 And thus (sad image !) nigh his downy mate,
 The swan divides the silver flood in state ;
 By instinct led, to meet his fate retires,
 Sings as he droops, and as he sings expires.——
 For soon the notes of melody are drown'd,
 And with dire clang contending arms resound.
 Enfeebled shouts and dying groans succeed ——
 Th' affrighted nuns with hasty steps recede ——
 The abbey gate its iron thunder pour'd ——
 With the hoarse echo ev'ry cloister roar'd ——
 Loud toll'd the alarm with a massy stroke ——
 The sacred battlements beneath it shook.
 " Oh ! fam'd for charity ! " a voice was heard,
 ' Ere yet the founding portal was unbarr'd,
 " Oh ! fam'd for charity and gentle deeds,
 " Ye rev'rend Fathers ! 'tis a stranger bleeds,
 " By violence assail'd, —— your help impart ——
 " Or e'er the gushing stream has drain'd the heart."
 Now pale and breathless, in the porch are seen,
 Two comely youths of no ignoble mien;
 A third with drooping head sustain'd between.

} The

The purple gore forth issuing from his breast
Stray'd in dark currents o'er his glittering vest;
Their dying charge, with anxious zeal surround
The holy friars, to relieve the wound.

Soon cheer'd awhile, he cast a lingering look,
And to his friends in piteous accents spoke:

" Farewell! dear youths, of friends the most sincere,

" And to my Sire th' unwelcome tidings bear;

" All melancholy tho' the news you tell,

" Such are your claims, he will receive you well;

" And my vast debt of gratitude will pay,

" As CLIFFORD's self had liv'd, to bless the day."——

" And oh! since life —— ye ministers of grace!

" Faint and more faint forsakes its frame apace;

" It well becomes my parting soul to tell,

" Nor longer the intended fraud conceal: ——

" Not guilt impell'd, nor an unhallow'd lust

" Urg'd my rash fury, to invade your trust;

" But all impatient to regain a bride,

" Betroth'd in purity, and maiden pride;

H

" Whose

" Whose equal love, unconscious of a crime,
 " To filial duty sacrific'd her prime :
 " With many a stratagem I trac'd the way,
 " And on this night had borne my love away :
 " When two lov'd Friends in my defence were slain
 " By ruthless spoilers in their lust of gain.
 " In Avon's flood, I saw the victims fall,
 " The spoilers fled : — we gain'd your sacred wall —
 " With tenderest feelings, these my sorrows bear,
 " Nor turn regardless from my latest pray'r,
 " Suffer these closing eyes again to view
 " Her angel form, and weep their last adieu !

The venerable men put off their pride,
 Relax'd their rigour, and in tears comply'd.
 ELTRUDA now between the virgin throng,
 With lab'ring heart, impatient pass'd along :
 Oft have you seen the silver queen of night,
 Sail with wan lustre, thro' the hosts of light ;
 All nature hush'd, save where the grove receives
 The air's cool whisper thro' the trembling leaves : —
 With such solemnity and silence too
 Amid the placid choir, ELTRUDA drew.

And

And now with grief she views his alter'd face,
Not alter'd so, but CLIFFORD she could trace;
All eloquent his dying eyes express'd
The mighty sorrows struggling in his breast:
With sudden shriek to save her lord she sprung,
And round his waist with mad'ning transport clung;
O'ercome with rapture CLIFFORD sunk apace,
Smil'd, — and expir'd, — within her strict embrace.
She mark'd the quiv'ring lip with steady eye,
And all collected caught his latest sigh:
“ 'Tis past! my love!” with firmest tone, she said,
“ And MORCAR's hard Decree has been obey'd; —
“ Sure I have felt my utmost anguish now,
“ And unrepining will renew my vow.
“ To follow thee, dear shade! be all my care,
“ And for thy bliss, prefer my warmest pray'r.
“ These walls shall witness to my daily tear,
“ Dropt from my inmost heart upon thy bier. —
“ But ah! for me, unhappy me, he died!” —
At this the failing tongue its task denied,
O'er her film'd sight a sudden darkness spread,
Her strength forsook her, and her colour fled. —

She

She sunk to earth ; ——— around the vestal train
Strive to rekindle vital heat in vain.
A creeping chill benumb'd her pallid frame
And a deep sigh dismiss'd the languid flame.
With poignant grief each forrowing vestal there
Heav'd the full sigh, and shed the copious tear.
The fathers too some pious drops let fall,
For sense of human frailty touch'd them all !
Beneath the choir, their silent clay repos'd,
And the same tomb the hapless pair inclos'd ;
And oft as Time the fatal day review'd,
A solemn fast their memory renew'd.——

End of the First Part.